

2001 Report of The Division of State Court Administration

Lilia G. Judson, Executive Director

The Division of State Court Administration is a statutory office created to assist the Indiana Supreme Court in the administration and management of Indiana's judicial system. The Division staff serves under the direct authority of the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice, Supreme Court and the General Assembly assign duties to the Division.

Statistics

Pursuant to Indiana Code 33-2.1-7-3 and Indiana Supreme Court Administrative Rules 1 and 2, the Division collects and publishes information on the caseload and fiscal activities of all courts and probation offices throughout the state. The data is published annually in *The Indiana Judicial Service Report* and *The Indiana Probation Report*. This data provides the empirical basis for policy decisions by the Indiana Supreme Court and the Indiana General Assembly.

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This data provides the empirical basis for policy decisions by the Indiana Supreme Court and the Indiana General

Assembly. The statistical data is gathered on a calendar year basis. The 1999 statistics indicate a continued increase over prior years in the number of cases filed in and disposed by Indiana's courts of record.

Legal Responsibilities

The Supreme Court and the Chief Justice assign the majority of the legal responsibilities of the Division. The Division legal staff serves as counsel to the Supreme Court in matters involving attorney discipline and requests for the appointment of special judges, special masters, and senior judges. In fiscal year 2001/2002, Division legal staff assisted the Supreme Court in disposing of 119 disciplinary matters. As part of this disciplinary function, the Division staff conducts preliminary investigations of disciplinary grievances filed against members and staff of the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission, attorneys who are serving as hearing officers in disciplinary cases, as well as requests for review of decisions by the Disciplinary Commission and the Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications.

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this disciplinary function, Division staff conducts preliminary investigations of disciplinary grievances filed against members and staff of the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission, as well as requests for review of decisions by the Disciplinary Commission and the Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications.

Supreme Court rules governing the method of special judge selection call for the establishment of local rules for such selection and certification to the Supreme Court in certain unusual circumstances. The Division monitors local rules establishing plans for special judge selection and processes requests for the appointment of special judges by the Supreme Court. In fiscal year 2001-2002, the Division received 195 new requests for special judge appointments.

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Various federal and state laws, rules and regulations, as well as U.S. Supreme Court decisions affect the administrative responsibilities of trial judges. Since 1996, the Division has designated a labor law attorney to provide advice to trial judges on employment law issues. A significant part of this function involves training for judges and their staff on issues such as Sexual Harassment Sensitivity Awareness, the Americans With Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Fair Labor Standards

Act, Effectively Disciplining and Terminating Problem Employees, and Effective Use of Policies and Drug Testing.

Rule Amendments and the Supreme Court Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure

The Executive Director of the Division serves as Executive Secretary of the Indiana Supreme Court Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure and assists the Committee and the Supreme Court in drafting and promulgating amendments to the Indiana Rules of Court. The committee's work in 2001 culminated with the Supreme Court adopting a new set of Jury Rules for Indiana, effective January 1, 2003. Other amendments implemented statutory changes to protective orders proceedings and provided for electronic transmittal of discovery.

Judicial Qualifications / Nominating Commission

Pursuant to IC 33-2.1-7-3(a)(4), the Division provides legal and administrative staff support to the Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications and the Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission. The Qualifications Commission investigates and prosecutes allegations of ethical misconduct by Indiana judges, judicial officers, and candidates for judicial office. The Commission staff is available to advise judges and others about the Code of Judicial Conduct, and the Commission periodically issues formal advisory opinions about judicial ethics. The Nominating Commission selects the Chief Justice of Indiana from among the five Justices, and it solicits and interviews candidates for vacancies on the Indiana Supreme Court, the Indiana Court of Appeals, and the Indiana Tax Court. The Nominating

Commission also certifies former judges as Senior Judges.

During fiscal year 2001-2002, the Nominating Commission selected Chief Justice Randall T. Shepard to serve his fourth term as Chief Justice of Indiana beginning March 4, 2002. It re-certified eighty-seven Senior Judges, and certified two new Senior Judges.

The Qualifications Commission had on its docket two hundred forty-one misconduct cases in fiscal year 2001-2002. It issued twenty-five private cautions to judges or candidates about their conduct, and filed formal disciplinary charges against three judges. Of those, two were pending at the end of the fiscal year, and the third was resolved by a settlement agreement to a Public Reprimand. Two formal disciplinary charges from the prior year were resolved by settlement agreements; in one, the Supreme Court imposed a fifteen-day suspension from office without pay and, in the other, the Court imposed a Public Reprimand. Another disciplinary proceeding from the prior year resulted in an evidentiary hearing in February, 2002. In that case, the Commission filed with the Court a recommendation that it remove the judge from office; in light of that recommendation, the Court suspended the judge from office with pay pending the Court's final decision. A more detailed report about the Commission, its members, and its activities is published separately in the Indiana Supreme Court Annual Report.

Senior Judge Program

In 1989, the General Assembly enacted legislation allowing the Indiana Supreme Court to use the services of former judges who have been certified as Senior Judges by the Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission. The program, small at first, has grown into an

invaluable resource of about ninety seasoned judicial officers who serve at minimal cost. During fiscal year 2001/2002, senior judges logged 3,875 days of service in trial courts and the Indiana Court of Appeals. In addition to the certification and review of requests for this program, the Division administers the payroll and benefits for the participants. During fiscal year 2001/2002, the Division staff processed 325 requests for senior judge appointments to specific courts.

5) Senior Judge Program. In 1989, the General Assembly enacted legislation allowing the Indiana Supreme Court to utilize the services of former judges who have been certified as Senior Judges by the Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission. The program, small at first, has grown into an invaluable resource of about seventy seasoned judicial talent at minimal cost. During fiscal year 1999/2000, almost 3,400 days of service in trial courts and the Indiana Court of Appeals were logged by senior judges. The Division administers all aspects of the program, starting with certification by the Nominating Commission, processing of requests for appointments by the Supreme Court, and administering payroll and benefits for the participants. During fiscal year 1999/2000, Division staff processed 321 requests for senior judge appointments to specific courts.

Weighted Caseload Measures and Caseload Redistribution Plans

Following a two-year study in the mid-1990's conducted by the Judicial Administration Committee of the Indiana Judicial Conference, the Division, and an independent consultant, Indiana developed a system for measuring caseloads based on weighted relative times for cases. This Weighted Caseload Measures system examines only new cases filed in trial courts. These weighted statistics provide the

Indiana Supreme Court and General Assembly the information necessary for allocation of judicial resources.

Trial courts use these same statistical measures to develop county caseload plans which seek to reduce disparity in caseloads and judicial resources so that all courts in a county fall within a 25% variance range of the average county caseload. A similar effort on the judicial district level has reallocated cases and resources to ease caseload in busier counties while better utilizing existing resources in counties with a lower caseload.

During much of 2001 the Division joined forces once again with the Judicial Administration Committee of the Indiana Judicial Conference to conduct an update and validation of the Weighted Caseload Measures. Since the study was first conducted, the addition of new case type designations and procedural and substantive changes necessitated an update of the original study. The results of the update to the Weighted Caseload Measures will be completed in the fall of 2002.

Judicial Technology and Automation

By an Administrative Rule, the Indiana Supreme Court established a special committee, Judicial Technology and Automation Committee, (JTAC), chaired by Supreme Court Justice Frank Sullivan, Jr., and asked it to guide Indiana's judicial system in implementing a modern case management and information sharing system.

The Division staff serves as JTAC's staff. Division staff, through its Automation and Technical Services Section (see next section), traditionally has provided the technical and automation support for the appellate level courts. The creation of JTAC,

however, has focused the Supreme Court's attention on the use of technology in the trial courts. Although a long-standing goal for the Court, funding technology in the trial courts has been a daunting issue in Indiana because the operations of Indiana's trial courts are funded through county funds.

The Division staff assisted JTAC in great successes on three key projects: (1) providing e-mail and internet access to all trial court judges and clerks, (2) providing flat-rate on-line legal research through LEXIS-NEXIS to all courts and Indiana government, and (3) providing computer training to court and clerk staff through a partnership with Ivy Tech State College,

JTAC then embarked upon its major project, the design and deployment of a 21st Century case management system. The Indiana General Assembly provided funding for a large portion of this initiative by establishing a designated judicial technology fee and making some specific appropriations.

In late 2001, JTAC published a Public Notice of Contracting Opportunities seeking responses from vendors to answer Indiana's need for a case management system. More than 30 vendors responded with custom proposals. Ultimately, JTAC recommended and the Supreme Court approved the selection of a proposal by Computer Associates. In June of 2002 the Division executed a contract for the customization and deployment a modern case management (CMS) system to any Indiana county that elects to participate. Through this project, the Supreme Court's objective is to modernize Indiana's courts, enhance their efficiency and effectiveness, and enable them to share information with each other and with other users of judicial information, such as the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the State Police, the

Department of Family and Social Services, etc.

Appellate Court Automation and Technical Services

The Technical Services Section of the Division provides daily computer operations support to all appellate level courts and their adjunct agencies. Justices, judges and staff now have available to them secure, remote access when traveling or at home. Also available to staff are enhanced connections with other state agencies including the Budget Agency, Auditor's Office, Department of Personnel, and Department of Administration.

Several web projects have been completed and others are under development. Attorneys may view their CLE credit hours on the Internet protected by a password. Attorneys can also view available CLE classes on the Internet and may search by date, area of law, or geographic location.

In the most recent project, the dockets of the Indiana Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and Tax Court were posted on the Internet with live, current data. The deployment on the Internet of the list of all Indiana attorneys is under development. Also during the reporting year, the statistical quarterly case status report forms (QCSR) were programmed so courts will be able to enter the report data through the Internet. This project is in a pilot test phase.

Indiana Conference for Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO)

Indiana CLEO has continued to grow since its inception in 1997 as the first state-sponsored legal education program. The Indiana CLEO program was established by the General Assembly to provide incentives and support to disadvantaged students to

enter and stay in the legal profession in Indiana. The program has already served as a model for two other states that have implemented similar "CLEO" programs. The Division administers the program with the guidance of an advisory board that is chaired by the Chief Justice of Indiana. The Indiana CLEO program now has the same number of CLEO Fellows in law school (eighty-seven) as the number that have successfully completed law school (eighty-seven).

An integral part of Indiana CLEO continues to be an intensive six-weeks summer Institute for the annually selected CLEO class of thirty CLEO Fellows. The CLEO Institute prepares the CLEO fellows for the rigors of a law school education. Indiana CLEO also continues to provide a summer job program and mentoring and networking opportunities for first year CLEO students.

During the fiscal year, Indiana CLEO initiated the SUCCESS program for first year law students at each of Indiana's law schools. The SUCCESS program assists the students in exam preparation, legal writing, note taking and outlining.

Guidance and assistance is also available to graduates studying for the Indiana bar exam. Through a special aspect of the CLEO program called Preparing Accomplished Students for Success on the Indiana bar Exam (PASS), the Division and volunteers from the Indiana Bar provide bar review assistance that concentrates on the writing portions of the Indiana bar exam.

Indiana CLEO continues to grow and expand the opportunities available for both Indiana CLEO Fellows students and alumni.

Civil Legal Aid Fund

Since 1997, the Division has been responsible for administering a state fund for legal assistance to indigent persons in civil cases. In July of 2001, and January of 2002, the Division made distributions, totaling one million dollars, to ten organizations providing civil legal aid services to Indiana's poor. Under new federal guidelines, only one Indiana organization received money from the Legal Services Corporation for indigent services. As a result, two providers merged and one ceased operation, thereby reducing the number of qualified organizations in Indiana from twelve to ten. Distributions are based upon an analysis of each county's civil caseload, as it relates to the caseload for the entire state, and the number of organizations serving each county. During the year, preparation was made for the anticipated change in the structure of legal services for the indigent in Indiana.

In order to provide an empirical basis for evaluation of the program, the Division structured and instituted a data collection system whereby service providers collect and report on the services they provide to the poor in a uniform manner susceptible to analysis. The first Civil Legal Aid statistical report will be published in July of 2002.

Court Improvement Grant

The Indiana Supreme Court, through its Court Improvement Executive Committee and with the benefit of federal funds, continued a Court Improvement Project. The gist of the project is to improve the disposition time and services in cases involving abused and neglected children. The Division serves as the project director and fiscal administrator.

Although the purpose and overall framework of the project are set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services and the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law, the Supreme Court and the members of an executive committee have guided the direction of the Indiana program. During the initial phase of this multi-phased project, the committee identified several areas of particular concern, which were targeted in subsequent phases. In the second phase, eighteen county level programs aimed at expediting CHINS cases were implemented. During a third phase, efforts were focused on larger, more comprehensive improvements in the delivery of services to children in the more populous counties of Lake, Marion, Elkhart, and St. Joseph. In a fourth phase, funding was providing to assist in the design of two Family Court Pilot Projects. The projects, located in Putnam and Porter counties, use mediation/facilitation services in family court cases with CHINS involvement.

Recently, a fifth phase funded eight counties that plan to replicate the successful programs in phase three. These include pre-hearing facilitation in CHINS cases, case manager services, and family court projects. The Supreme Court anticipates that the innovative programs developed through this grant will markedly improve the delivery of services to Indiana's children.

Information Management

Pursuant to a statutory directive, the Division must examine the business methods and systems employed in the offices of the courts, clerks and others serving the courts and recommend improvements. The Supreme Court, by Administrative Rule, created a Records Management Committee, which is chaired by Supreme Court Justice Brent Dickson. The Committee provides leadership and guidance to the Information Management Section of the Division.

In performing its records management function, the Division assists Indiana courts and clerks with managing judicial information from its creation, to maintenance, access, and disposal. One significant area is assisting counties with the disposal of nonpermanent records through the use of a records retention schedule promulgated by the Supreme Court. As in previous years, the Division staff assisted several counties to reduce their non-permanent records.

Staff of the Information Management Section visited twenty counties throughout 2001 for a total of twenty-nine on-site days. During these visits the Division helped courts with microfilming and imaging procedures and policies, records disposal and retention and confidentiality procedures

The Division staff is a regular contributor to the annual conference of city clerks and judges, as well as the annual conference of circuit court clerks. These forums provide some of the rare education opportunities available to Indiana's independently elected clerks.

Protective Order Proceedings

One of the Division's specific statutory responsibilities is to design and update the forms used in protective order proceedings. During the reporting year, the Division worked with a special Protective Orders Committee convened by the Supreme to review the protective order process in Indiana and recommend improvements. Indiana's judiciary met with success in the Legislature during the 2002 session. The Protective Order Committee authored and successfully shepherded through the Legislature a much-needed extensive revision of Indiana's procedures on orders of protection. The amendments are effective July 1, 2002. They make Indiana's laws comport with

federal standards. Pursuant to statute, the Division During the second half of the year, considerable effort was devoted to implementing the new law through redesign of forms and seminars and training for clerks and judges.

Accounts Management, Payroll and Claims, Judicial Benefits Coordination

The Division maintains and administers 14 accounts, totaling approximately \$68,875,000. The administration of payroll and benefit program for all state trial court judges, prosecuting attorneys, and other judicial officials paid with state funds is part of this fiscal responsibility. The annual payroll account for this purpose is approximately \$58,185,000 and covers approximately seven hundred individuals. Also, as part of this "paymaster" function, the Division processes and pays in excess of 3,515 claims per year for special and senior judge service. {tc " 12) Accounts Management, Payroll and Claims, Judicial Benefits Coordination. The Division maintains and administers thirteen accounts, totaling approximately \$62,000,000. The administration of payroll and benefit program for all state trial court judges, prosecuting attorneys, and other judicial officials paid with state funds is part of this fiscal responsibility. The annual payroll account for this purpose is upwards of \$55,000,000 and covers approximately seven hundred individuals. Also, as part of this "paymaster" function, the Division processes and pays in excess of 1,000 claims per year for special and senior judge service.

Indiana Office of GAL/CASA

In 1989, the Indiana General Assembly established an office of Guardian *Ad Litem* and Court Appointed Special Advocate services to be administered through the Division.

Through this program, counties are encouraged to provide appropriate GAL/CASA services by receiving matching state funding administered by the Division and disbursed pursuant to a statutory formula. In addition, the state office provides training and support services for local GAL/CASA programs. An advisory commission, which includes program directors and judges appointed by the Indiana Supreme Court, provides guidance. In state fiscal year 2001, seventy-five counties qualified for and received state GAL/CASA funds. Sixty-seven counties in Indiana funded a volunteer-based GAL/CASS program, staffed by 124 paid personnel.

In 2001 the state office collected data and compiled statistics for its second annual report. Of the programs in Indiana, 97% responded to the request for submission of data. From the information garnered from those programs, the state office determined that at least 1, 911 volunteers provided services to children in 2001 and of those volunteers 567 were newly trained in 2001. Even so, there were 2, 188 children still waiting for a Gal/CASA volunteer to be appointed to their cases.

The National CASA Association has recently updated and revised the training curriculum it provides to affiliated programs at no cost, so the state office staff has been busy assisting in training volunteers in the new materials and has been very active in assisting local program staff that has the technology to learn and use COMET, an electronic case management tool provided to local programs with no cost through the National CASA Association served in Indiana. In addition, for the second year, the Advisory Commission held a day long strategic planning session to set goals and objectives for the state office as well as the state network. **13) Indiana Office of GAL/CASA.** In 1989, the Indiana

General Assembly established an office of Guardian *Ad Litem* and Court Appointed Special Advocate services to be administered through the Division. Through this program, counties are encouraged to provide appropriate GAL/CASA services by receiving matching state funding administered by the Division and disbursed pursuant to a statutory formula. In addition, the state office provides training and support services for local GAL/CASA programs. An advisory commission, which includes program directors and judges appointed by the Indiana Supreme Court, provides guidance. In 1999, seventy-nine counties qualified for and received state GAL/CASA funds. The Advisory Commission, upon the recommendation of staff, re-certified eight local programs through a voluntary process by which local programs are certified to meet certain minimum standards for their operation, recruitment and training of volunteers. Staff participated in training volunteers in four county programs."}

Funding received from a two- year grant from the National CASA Association ends in July 2002, but the state office has been notified that the grant will be renewed for another two-year cycle. . The grant has enabled the state office to offer additional services to communities that do not yet have active CASA programs, to assist programs that are in existence but may be floundering, and to provide enhanced support services to thriving programs. Funding from the grant has made it possible to publish a quarterly newsletter and conduct quarterly regional training for program directors

Staff also participated in the swearing in program for the first group of trained volunteers in Marshall County and the state office has been instrumental in training and assisting the new director gets established. CASA volunteers in Judicial Districts One and Three were invited to attend spring

district meetings in April 2001 and local directors from those districts made presentations to the judiciary at the district meetings.

On November 2, 2001, the state office held a meeting for staff from all local programs, just a day before the office again sponsored its State Conference on November 3. Over 70 local county directors and their staff attending the day long staff meeting and over 300 CASA volunteers, local program directors, service providers, board members and local program staff attended the annual conference.

The state office also sought and secured a grant from the National CASA Association. The grant has enabled the state office to offer additional services to communities that do not yet have active CASA programs, to assist programs that are in existence but may be floundering, and to provide enhanced support services to thriving programs. Funding from the grant has made it possible to publish a quarterly newsletter and conduct quarterly regional training for program directors this past year. On November 13, 1999, the office again sponsored its State Conference, which included a keynote speech by Justice Sullivan and a presentation on the federal and state legislative changes in juvenile law. Over 200 CASA volunteers, local program directors, service providers, board members and local program staff attended.

Family Courts Project

The Indiana Family Court Project has been highly successful. Since its beginning in 2000, the main focus of the Project has been the coordination of families who have multiple court cases pending before multiple judges. Pilot family court projects in Johnson, Monroe and Porter Counties created two alternative models to serve multiple-case families: (1) “one family-one judge”

and (2) “information sharing among multiple judges and parties involved with the family”. The pilot projects worked within the local community structure to determine and meet the unique needs of their counties, and to provide affordable non-adversarial dispute resolution and service delivery as needed. Attorneys, service providers, and litigants have expressed strong support for their pilot projects, and note that case coordination is more efficient and effective for families. As of May 2002, the Johnson County project had assigned 98 families to its family court project involving 254 cases, Porter County had assigned 115 families to its family court project involving 443 cases, and Monroe County had assigned 50 families to its family court project involving 182 cases.

Given the successes of the original pilot counties an additional \$400,000 was designated by the Indiana Supreme Court in 2002 for Phase II of the Family Court Project. LaPorte and Marion Counties were selected to create single county family court projects, and Boone and Montgomery Counties and Putnam and Owen Counties were selected to develop joint-county projects. The Indiana Family Court Project will continue to promote “family court” not as a particular court structure or judgeship, but as a concept for better serving families through coordinated information sharing and service delivery, with a commitment to assisting pro se litigants and facilitating non-adversarial dispute resolution.

Public Defender Commission

Pursuant to statute, the Division provides staff support to the Indiana Public Defender Commission and administers the Public Defender Fund. The Commission sets standards for indigent defense services in capital and non-capital cases and administers a

program of reimbursements to qualified counties under IC 33-9-14-4. Between July 1, 2001, and June 30, 2002, staff met with judges and local officials on eleven separate occasions and participated in five judicial district presentations. During the same period, the Commission approved two new counties to receive reimbursements for non-capital cases.

During the 2001 session of the General Assembly, the appropriation for the Public Defense Fund was substantially increased. For fiscal year 2001-2002, the Fund's appropriation will increase from \$2.4 million to \$6.0 million. For fiscal year 2002-2003, the appropriation will increase to \$7.0 million.

At present, fifty counties have comprehensive plans approved by the Commission for delivery of indigent services. Currently, over fifty percent of the state's population resides in counties eligible to receive reimbursements under the program. The Commission approved reimbursements to eleven counties in eighteen separate death penalty cases in the first three quarters of fiscal year 2001-2002, totaling \$473,317.

The Commission temporarily suspended reimbursements in non-capital cases during the year due to a shortfall in funding. The suspended payments will be paid on a pro rata basis at the close of the fiscal year. In non-capital cases, during fiscal year 2001-2002, the Commission approved reimbursements for forty-four counties totaling \$4,869,314. As a result of the increase in the Public Defender Fund, the Commission anticipates continued growth and participation in the Fund.

Sharing Information Through the Internet and Traditional Publications

The Division publishes a newsletter, *The Indiana Court Times*, which serves as a communication link with the trial courts, their staff, the clerks of court, and all other entities involved in the courts' work. The Division designs and maintains the website for the appellate level courts and their adjunct offices. In addition to court opinions, rule amendments, downloadable forms, summary statistical reports, a self help center, Indiana CLEO applications and advisory opinions issued by the Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications, are now available on the website. Most recently, Indiana's attorneys can now view and track their continuing education courses (CLE) over the Internet. {tc "16) The Internet and Traditional Publications. The Division publishes a newsletter, *The Indiana Court Times*, which serves as a communication link with the trial courts and their staff. The newsletter is also available on the Division's website. In addition to court opinions, rule amendments, and other information about Indiana's judiciary, downloadable forms, summary statistical reports, and advisory opinions, issued by the Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications, are now available on the website.

Indiana Supreme Court Commission on Race and Gender Fairness

Sparked by concerns about race and gender fairness in Indiana's justice system, the Supreme Court, through an administrative rule, created the Indiana Supreme Court Commission on Race and Gender Fairness in 1999. Representatives of Indiana's judiciary, the practicing bar, academia, state and local governments, public organizations, and law enforcement and corrections comprise the twenty-five member Commission, chaired by former Indiana Supreme Court Justice Myra Selby. The Division of State Court Administration serves as staff to the Commission. At

the request of Chief Justice Shepard, the 2001 General Assembly appropriated a distinct budget for the work of the Commission.

The Commission's charge is to study the status of race and gender fairness in the judicial system and recommend ways for improvement. The Commission has divided into subcommittees, which are studying the following topics: Language and Cultural Barriers, Make Up of the Profession, Treatment by the Courts, and Civil, Domestic, Family, and Employment law issues, all of which are growing concerns in Indiana.

Since its inception, the Commission has researched statistical census and demographic data, identified broad issues which it will study, determined the means by which it will collect information regarding those issues and created a website and informational brochure.

During the summer of 2001, the Commission hosted Community Forums in six locations across Indiana, which afforded Indiana residents the opportunity to voice concerns on race and gender fairness issues in Indiana's judicial system without necessitating lengthy travel. The commission is also conducting a number of surveys that will provide it with empirical data, which the commission will evaluate. The survey results, the focus group discussions, research of other state's efforts and other elements will be compiled in a report the Commission plans to submit to the Indiana Supreme Court at the end of 2002.

Task Force on Voice Recognition Technology Initiatives

In 1999, the Chief Justice appointed a special task force to examine voice recognition technology. The mission of the Voice Recognition Task Force is to

determine whether voice recognition technology might speed the production of transcripts in cases that are appealed. The chair of the Voice Recognition Task Force, the Honorable Daniel J. Vanderpool, reported on the Task Force's activities and the technology underlying voice recognition in a report to the Chief Justice in 2001. The report, along with other information about the Task Force can be found on the internet at:

www.in.gov/judiciary/committees/voice.html

Two pilot sites were selected for the program: one in Porter County and one in Lake County. These two sites began work with the voice recognition equipment in November, 2001. The experiment is expected to conclude in early 2003, at which time a more thorough evaluation of the capabilities and efficiencies of the voice recognition technology will be made.

Judicial District Business Meetings

During early 2002, in conjunction with the Indiana Judicial Center, the Division helps sponsor the biannual judicial district business for Judicial Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 13. Clerks of the Circuit Courts and their deputies were also invited to attend the plenary sessions of these meetings to discuss further the acquisition and customization for a statewide case management system. Judges and clerks also learned about the new protective order statutes, the activities of the Board of Law Examiners, Gal/CASA services and the progress of District *Pro Bono* Plans.

Committee on Local Rules

At the request of the Supreme Court Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Supreme Court convened a special Local Rules Committee to examine the local court

rules of Indiana's courts and to recommend a model structure for such rules. The Division administers, coordinates and provides staff to the new committee, which is chaired by the Hon. Margret Robb of the Indiana Court of Appeals. The first task of the committee during the reporting year was the compilation of all existing local rules into one place. The committee expects to complete its work by the end of 2002.

Indiana Project on Self-Represented Litigants

The Indiana Supreme Court, with the assistance of the Division and the Counsel to the Chief Justice, David Remondini, recently began the groundwork for a statewide *pro se* assistance network that will provide basic resources to self represented litigants. This project is funded for one year and was made possible through a grant from the State Justice Institute. A fifteen-member committee of judges, clerks, and others dedicated to assisting *pro se* litigants guides the project, which is housed and administered by the Division.

Initially, the project will involve three pilot programs in Marion, Tippecanoe and Monroe Counties. The ultimate goal of this project is the development and implementation of standardized forms for statewide use in simple domestic relations litigation. These standardized forms also will be translated into Spanish and made available to parties.